

A Better Reservoir For a Better Future

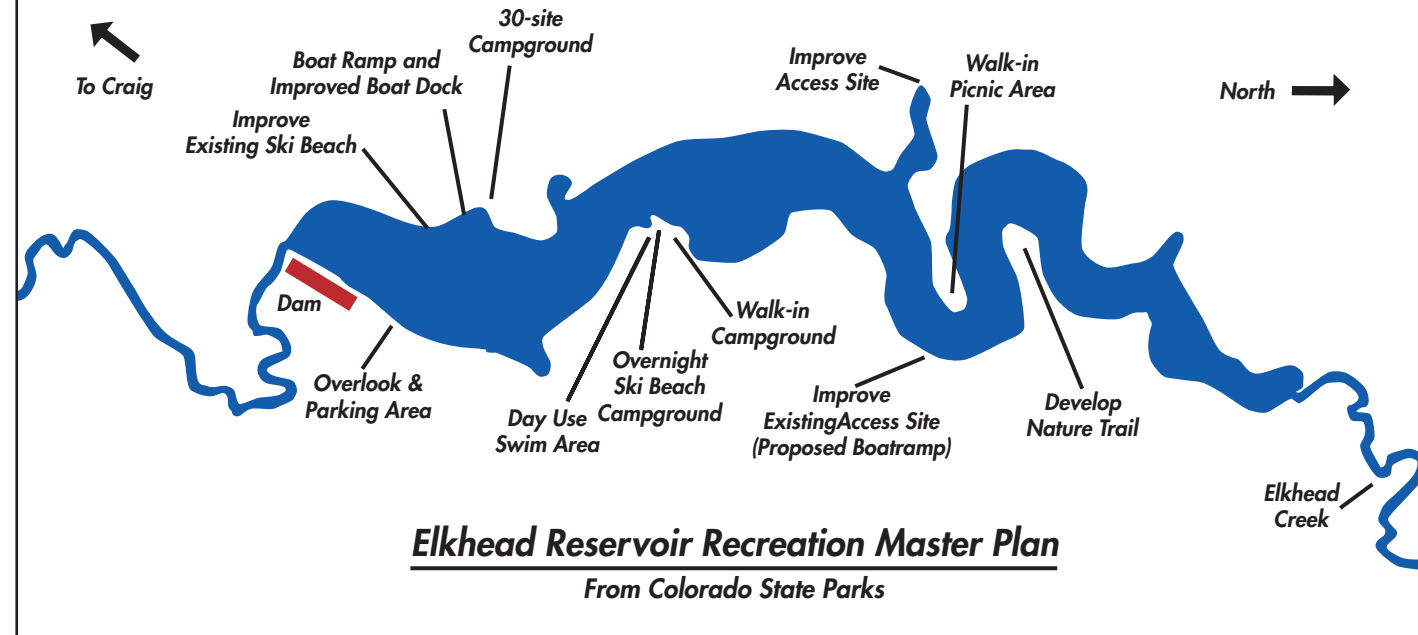
After four decades of service, Elkhead dam and reservoir will be growing so it can enhance its role as a secure water supply and excellent recreational amenity for the residents of northwestern Colorado. A growing demand for water in the Yampa River Basin and the need for improved recreational facilities require that Elkhead Reservoir increase by almost 12,000 acre-feet to meet these needs.

Enlarging Elkhead Reservoir has been in the works for over 15 years. When Elkhead Reservoir was opened in 1974, its mission was to provide lake fishing opportunities for northwestern Colorado and to provide water for the steam-powered turbines at Craig's coal-fired power plants. In 1990, the City of Craig purchased Elkhead Reservoir to secure its municipal water supply and provide recreation.

Today there are new issues to confront. A new supply of water is necessary to recover endangered fish species in the Yampa River. To comply with federal Endangered Species Act guidelines and Recovery Program objectives, additional water releases are required to maintain adequate stream-flows in the Yampa River from late July through September. Extra water released from an enlarged Elkhead Reservoir will help sustain endangered fish populations without curtailing current or future human use of the Yampa River.

The City of Craig is growing and needs a bigger water supply that an enlarged reservoir will provide. Adding extra storage for human consumption at Elkhead reservoir will ensure that residents of Craig will have water to use now and in the future.

Many More Ways to Play at the New Elkhead Reservoir



How will Recreation Improve?

Whether you are a fisherman, boater, camper or just want to spend the day at Elkhead, you will see big benefits from improved recreation facilities when the reservoir reopens.

Colorado State Parks has ambitious plans for more and better recreation at Elkhead Reservoir. Boaters and fishermen will gain better access through a second boat ramp on the reservoir's east side and an enlarged boat ramp on the reservoir's west side. Camping opportunities will increase with additional camping sites on both sides of the reservoir featuring grills, tables and shelters and even a number of sites with power. More and larger beaches, designated swimming areas and improved facilities for water skiers and anglers will make Elkhead Reservoir a recreation haven.

Who Can I Contact About Elkhead?

On the web: www.crwcd.org/elkhead

Reservoir enlargement activities:

Dan Birch,
Colorado River Water Conservation District
Ph: (970) 871-1529 • E-mail: dbirch@crwcd.org

Ray Tenney,
Colorado River Water Conservation District
Ph: (970) 945-8522 • E-mail: rttenney@crwcd.org

Fishing and recreation:

Ron Dellacrocce,
Colorado State Parks
Ph: (970) 276-2061 • E-mail: yampa@csn.net

Jim Haskins
Colorado Division of Wildlife
Ph: (970) 276-3338

Recovery Program on the web:
www.r6.fws.gov/coloradoriver

Spring 2005 Construction Update

IMPROVING ELKHEAD RESERVOIR

What will it mean for you?



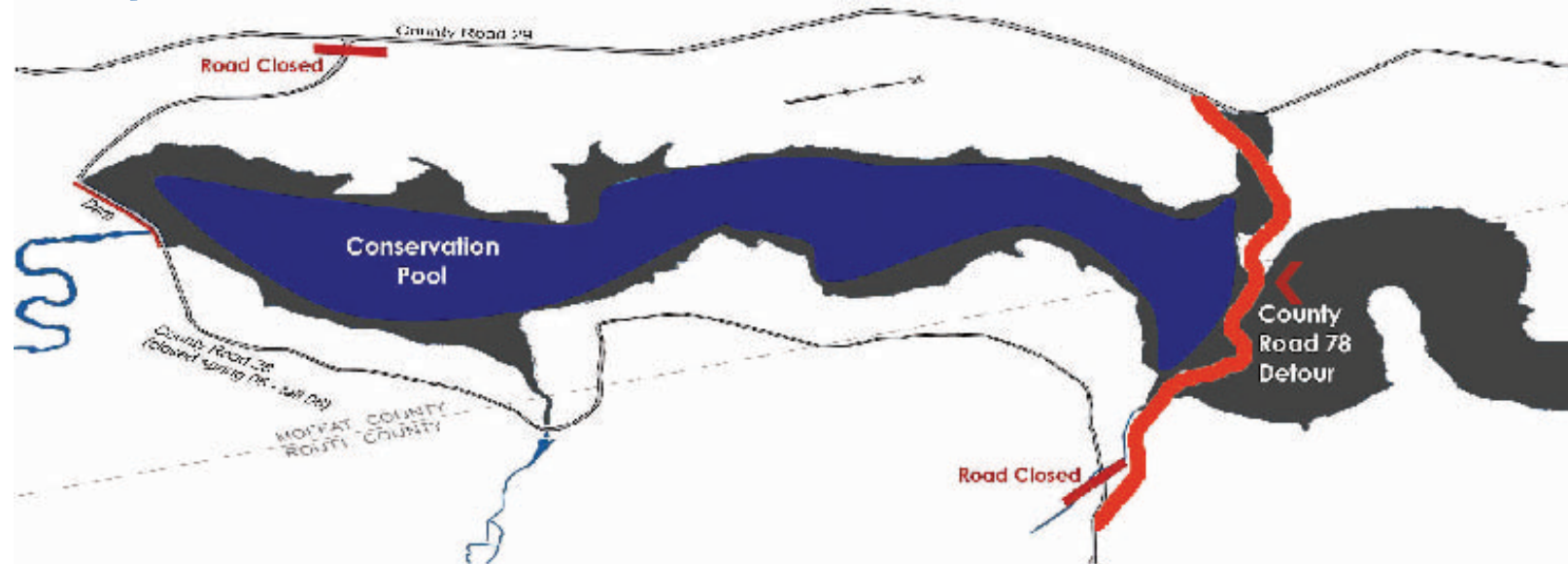
For the latest information about Elkhead on the Web:
www.crwcd.org/elkhead



protecting Western
Colorado's water
since 1937

During the construction period, the section of County Road 28 crossing the Elkhead Dam crest will be closed. Traffic will still be able to access County Road 29 by detouring across the old County Road 78.

County Road 28 Closure and Detour



A “conservation pool” of water will remain in the reservoir for the continued survival of the fish currently in Elkhead Reservoir.

What’s the Timeline for Construction?

- **February 2005** Award construction contract for Elkhead Reservoir Enlargement.
- **March 2005** Begin construction of wetlands mitigation in the new delta area and begin tunneling for new outlet.
- **Spring 2005** Raise/Rebuild County Road 29; prepare dam site.
- **Summer 2005** Construct base of new embankment downstream of existing dam.
- **Summer 2006** Complete new outlet works; complete new spillway.
- **August 2006** Demolish old spillway; construct new embankment; Elkhead Creek routed through new outlet works.

- **Fall 2006** Complete new embankment; new road on dam crest; construct new recreation facilities; restore site; begin refilling reservoir.
- **Spring 2007** Fill enlarged reservoir; reopen State Park and new recreation facilities.
- **Summer 2007** Deliver water for endangered fish flows and human uses.

Will we be able to use the reservoir during these improvements?

For safety reasons, the entire reservoir site must be closed to all public use while work is being done. Because of the scale of this project, the reservoir will be closed for two years.

The conservation pool remaining at the reservoir will be closed to fishing. Safety concerns will not allow public access to this pool of water while work is in progress.

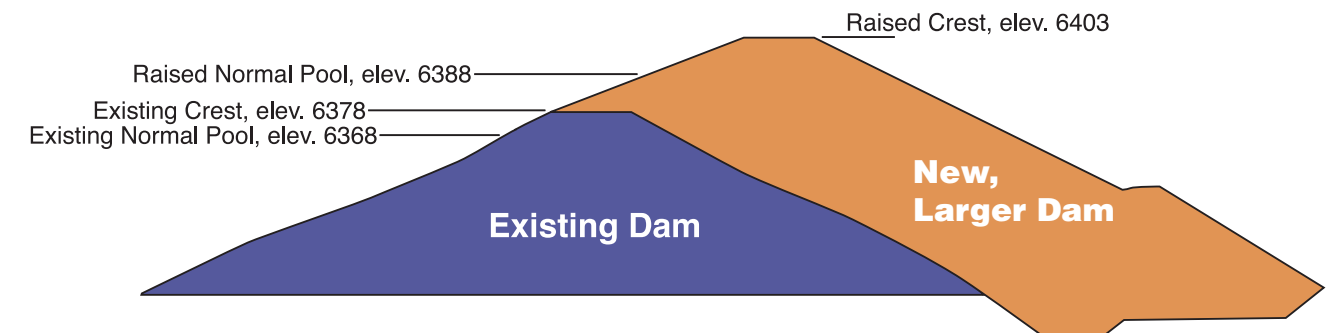
Colorado State Parks and the local Sheriff departments will patrol the reservoir area during the closure to ensure the public’s safety.

What will happen during Construction?

To accommodate a larger pool of water at Elkhead Reservoir, the dam height will be increased and the base widened (see illustration at lower right). The significant amount of earth material needed to build the larger dam structure will be excavated from areas within the reservoir’s boundaries.

As part of the enlargement process, a new outlet works will be installed to control water releases, and a new spillway will be constructed for discharging any excess water that the reservoir is unable to store.

The reservoir’s water level needs to be drawn down substantially to construct the new outlet works. The reservoir began draining in December 2004 to allow for work to begin in March 2005. Elkhead Reservoir will not be completely drained, however.



Side View of Enlargement of Existing Dam